1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

gold mines; or they work as paddlers on the rivers, which are practically the only means of communication.

The Sumu, on the other hand, are more timid and less enterprising. They are unwilling to leave their wives and children for a length of time in order to work for the benefit of the white men. Besides, even to this day, their wants are few, and they can easily do without practically any article of foreign manufacture. Formerly, however, many of them were active as rubber bleeders, but owing to East Indian competition, the export of that commodity from the Mosquito Coast has stopped altogether.

TRADE AND BARTER

INTERCHANGE OF COMMODITIES.—Among such rude hunting and fishing tribes as the Miskito and Sumu only a very restricted trade can have existed in former days. The rivers, lagoons, and the sea were practically the only means of communication, and this is still the case. The interchange of commodities was generally effected by barter. The Miskito appear to have also employed beads of sea shells as money, while the Sumu of the interior used cacao beans for the same purpose.[28] We are told by M. W. (304) that these two tribes, which were continually in a state of hostility, observed a truce on appointed days; they then met on an island in the lower Rio Coco for the purpose of trading.

These Indians live under an almost perfect equality, and there are no rich or poor among them. They do not strive to accumulate wealth, and the great unwearied exertion, found among our civilized societies, is unknown among them.

FORMER ARTICLES OF BARTER.—The Miskito used to evaporate salt from the water of the sea and lagoons and collect pretty sea shells suitable for beads. These commodities were exchanged with the Sumu for pottery, cotton goods, hammocks, bark cloth, and rough canoes.

During the latter part of the seventeenth century, and for many years following, the Miskito undertook daring sea voyages as far south as Chiriqui Lagoon in Panama, and occasionally even beyond that region. These expeditions were, however, not organized with peaceful trading in view, but for the purpose of stealing cacao from the Spanish settlers at Rio Matina (Costa Rica), and capturing Indians to be sold to the English traders of Jamaica.

PRESENT-DAY COMMODITIES.—Nowadays the Indian's wants from the outside world are many. The Miskito, who are less primitive than their neighbors, were already in commercial relations with

[28] According to G. N. Collins (see Safford in Smithsonian Report for 1916, p. 421) this use still persists in the Mexican State of Chiapas.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

The men taking part at the *asaŭ lâwana* had the whole body painted black and wore nothing but the loin cloth. They had to be ceremonially "pure" (*sunu*), a condition which was obtained by abstinence from women, salt, red peppers, and intoxicating liquor. Any one daring to come to the festival in a state of "uncleanness" was supposed to be killed by an awful giant, some sort of evil spirit, which came from some neighboring hill, and walked about the house with a quiver full of arrows. He was well treated and given plenty of *pupui* (maize liquor), for every one was afraid of him.

At the *asaŭ lâwana* trials of endurance took place in order to train the young men in supporting pain without the slightest groan. They also had the object of settling disputes which had been in suspense for some time. One man leans over and lets his opponent strike his back as hard as he can with the point of the elbow, until the latter is tired of punching. He is not supposed to utter the least groan nor show any other sign of pain. From time to time he merely says *yaŭ al yaŭ*, "I am a man," whereupon his adversary replies *yaŭ bik al yaŭ*, "I am also a man." When the latter is tired of punching the two men change places and he has to submit to the same rough treatment of his back by the other. Anyone giving up the struggle before his opponent is tired of striking is considered a coward; occasionally death has resulted from the effects of these terrible blows.

This method of fighting is unknown to the Miskito. The latter box a little, but it seems to be a point of honor with them to give and take blows in turn, and not to try how often they can strike each other as much as how long they can stand up to it.

PREPARATION OF AN EXPEDITION.—When the Miskito projected an armed expedition against the other Indian tribes or against the Spaniards they consulted one of their principal sukyas in order to hear if they would be successful. If the sukya's prediction, after having consulted the spirits, was unfavorable regarding the issue, the intended expedition was abandoned (M. W.: 307–308).

Both of these tribes were in the habit of painting the body hideously, perhaps with the object of scaring the enemy. Fair fighting was unknown. Attacks were carried out during the night, the enemy being taken by surprise.

INTERTRIBAL WARS.—The Miskito and Sumu were continually at war with each other as far back as the seventeenth century (Dampier: I, 9–10; M. W.: 300, 302, 305). These tribal wars continued throughout the eighteenth century and turned out to the advantage of the Miskito, who, having received European arms through the agency of the buccaneers from Jamaica, were able to conquer several subtribes of the Sumu from whom they collected tribute in the shape of canoes, deer skins, maize, cacao, rubber, etc.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

The Paya of Honduras were likewise expelled from the coast, the Miskito advancing as far as Rio Tinto, or Black River, and driving their enemies to the headwaters of the various streams. From the end of the seventeenth century on the Miskito frequently undertook raids into the territory of the Paya and exacted such large contributions of cattle or other things that the latter were obliged to steal them, at the risk of their lives, from the neighboring Spanish settlements, in order to save their families from being carried away and sold into slavery. During these excursions the Miskito took possession of the houses, wives, and children of the Paya until their demands were complied with. On account of this barbarous treatment many Paya fled to the Spanish settlements for protection (Long: I, 326–327). These incursions of the Miskito into the Paya region have continued until recent times (Young: 81; Conzemius, b: 32–33).

The Miskito not only became masters of the whole Atlantic coast line from Rio Tinto to Rio San Juan, but they carried on expeditions in seagoing canoes as far south as Chiriqui Lagoon and even beyond. These incursions were the chief cause of the depopulation of the Talamanca region of Costa Rica. The Miskito also proceeded inland up Rio Sixaula or Tiliri as far as the junction of Rio Coen and Rio Lari.

Isolated marauding expeditions by the Miskito to Costa Rica and Panama still continued practically throughout the eighteenth century. Cockburn (236) states that they invaded Chiriqui in 1732. In 1758 they are said to have been engaged in capturing Indian slaves around Bocas del Toro (Cuervo: I, 349–353). Roberts, writing in 1816, says the following regarding the encroachments of the Miskito on the territory of the Valiente Indians of northeastern Panama: "The Valientes are enemies of the Spaniards and pay a sort of tribute or acknowledgment to the Miskito King annually, which they consider in the light of a gratuitous present according to ancient custom, rather than an acknowledgment as subjects or a mark of subjugation. On more than one occasion they have refused to pay this tribute, and about 50 years ago, when a dispute took place on the subject, the Miskito King's uncle, with the whole of the chiefs and people who accompanied him, to the number of about 50 men, fell a sacrifice to their resentment (Roberts: 71).

The Miskito are even said to have gone as far as to attempt the subjugation of the San Blas Indians (also called Cuna, Tule) on the Isthmus of Panama, against whom their last expedition was sent about 1796. But the invaders, who were 300 men strong, were nearly all killed in the different engagements, and very few of them returned home (Roberts: 49–50). This is the only authority for Miskito incursions as far south as the Isthmus of Panama; the Indians them-

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

selves consider King Buppan's Bluff (Peñasco de Buppan, Frontón de Guapan), a promontory situated about 22 miles east of Escudo de Veragua Island, as the southernmost point visited by their ancestors.

Thus the Miskito acquired an ascendancy over practically the entire Atlantic seaboard from Cabo Honduras (near Trujillo in Honduras) to Chiriqui Lagoon (Panama). Their language is understood by many Indians from the neighboring tribes (Sumu, Rama, and Paya), and still plays the rôle of a *lingua franca* in certain parts of the Mosquito Coast. The part played by the Miskito in Central America in former days is similar to that of the Carib tribes of South America and the Antilles, but in the latter region the rôle of the English was taken by the Dutch.

The place names belonging to the Miskito language, which may be met with all along the Atlantic shore of Costa Rica and Panama as far south as King Buppan's Bluff, owe their origin to the above-mentioned marauding expeditions (Conzemius, a: 300–306). Still permanent settlements were not made by the Miskito on that vast region, the southern limit of their habitat being formed by Pearl Lagoon, where they established themselves during the latter part of the eighteenth century. About that same period they also spread up some of the larger rivers, as the Patúca, Guagua (Wawa), Cucallaya, Prinsapolca, Rio Grande, and especially Rio Coco; on the last-named stream they may be found as far up as Bocay, that is, about 300 miles from the sea by the circuitous course of the river.

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS.—As stated before, the Miskito began their slave-hunting expeditions into the territory of their neighbors toward the end of the seventeenth century. The captive women and children were either kept as slaves (M.: *alba* [1]; S.: *warau*) or they were sold to the Jamaican traders who arrived occasionally on the coast. The boys, when arrived at the age of puberty, were allowed to take a Miskito wife, and the children of such unions grew up as free members of the tribe.

Slave-hunting expeditions in seagoing canoes were particularly directed to the Talamanca region (southeastern Costa Rica), where many Tiribi (Terbi) Indians were reduced to slavery. The same fate met the aborigines living around Chiriqui Lagoon (M. W.: 302; Peralta, a: 20, 93, 95; Peláez: II, 156; Young: 35; Conzemius, a: 300–301). Many references to the Miskito slavers may also be

[1] This word has evidently some connection with *albawina*, by which name the Miskito called the Sumu formerly, or perhaps all their Indian enemies in general. The Black Carib or Garif apply to the Miskito the name *idudu*, which word likewise had originally the meaning of "slave." (Compare *tisto* "slave" in Father Gumilla's work.)

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

found in the works of the historians Juarros, León Fernández, R. Fernández Guardia, Ayón, Gámez, and Vallejo.[a]

In 1722 Spain protested to the British authorities of Jamaica on account of these slaving expeditions, alleging that the Miskito had captured in the valley of Rio Matina and on Tojares Island (Chiriqui Lagoon) over 2,000 Indians (Talamancas, Viceitas, Arinamaes, Abubaes) and sold them to Jamaican traders for arms and ammunition. On October 8, 1722, Diego de la Haya, Governor of Costa Rica, addressed a note to the authorities of Jamaica for the restitution of these Indians. (Peralta, a: 20–31; Fernández: IX, 153.)

The Sumu apparently did not enslave their prisoners, but killed them outright. Scalping was unknown, but the teeth and nails were extracted from the unhappy victims and carried round the neck as trophies. Certain subtribes of the Sumu were cannibals and roasted the enemies captured in war.

ALLIANCE OF THE MISKITO WITH THE BUCCANEERS.—During the seventeenth century the buccaneers, who were active in the Caribbean Sea preying upon the commerce of Spain, entered into friendly and commercial relations with the Miskito, who likewise were the enemies of the Spaniards. According to Exquemelin the first buccaneer vessel anchoring at Cabo Gracias a Dios was French. The captain was well received and made a few presents to the Indians, who in turn gave him products from their fields. When he left he carried along two of these Indians in order to provide his vessel with food, having observed their great skill in fishing. The two Indians were well treated; they learned French, and after one or two years were carried back home again. From that time the French and the Miskito became friends. Indian women were given to the former during their stay at Cabo Gracias a Dios and in payment the buccaneers gave iron tools. They had no trouble in being supplied with Indian fishermen when they left for a cruise, and some of them even picked up the Miskito language. The French made the English acquainted with their new friends. Many Indians served three or four years on the vessels of the buccaneers, learning either French or English, and then were paid off in iron tools (Exquemelin, Engl. ed.: 250; French ed.: II, 262–264).

It would appear, however, that later the English buccaneers were more esteemed than the French. Dampier (I, 8) states that the Indians "like the English but do not love the French," while according to Sloane (a: I, p. LXXVIII) the Miskito "do not allow any other nation but the English to settle among them and that they have

[a] See also Gaceta oficial de Costa Rica, 1864; A. von Frantzius, Archiv für Anthropologie, IV, 1870, p. 104; Thiel, Datos cronológicos para la historia eclesiástica de Costa Rica San José, under 1693; Restrepo, Viajes de L. Wafer, Bogotá, 1888, p. 110.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

some propensity to the Dutch, but hate the French mortally for their wanton behavior toward their wives." The statements of these two English authors should, perhaps, be accepted with reserve.

The Miskito were of valuable assistance to the buccaneers, for they were, and still are, singularly skillful with the spear. When a party of buccaneers put to sea without provisions they steered to the feeding grounds of the sea turtle or they stopped at a lagoon where the manatee was to be found. Here two Indians set out in their own small canoe. Two Miskito were able to catch enough fish, manatee, or turtle to supply a vessel of 100 men. For that reason they were much esteemed by the buccaneers and nearly every vessel from Jamaica had a couple of these Indians on board (Exquemelin, English ed.: 250; Dampier: I, 1–2, 35–37, 160, 181, 234, 277, 453, and II, part II, 13, 109; Raveneau de Lussan: 440).[43]

The Miskito were not only used as fishermen by the buccaneers but they also bore arms. They were bold and courageous in the fight and they shared in the capture. Among these sea rovers the Indians became first acquainted with the use of firearms and soon proved very good marksmen (Dampier: I, 2, 8). Miskito strikers even accompanied the buccaneers in the Pacific Ocean. In January, 1681, a party of English freebooters under Sharp and Watling were anchoring at the island of Juan Fernandez in the southern Pacific, about 400 miles west of Chile. Being persecuted by three Spanish vessels they hurriedly lifted anchor and sailed away, leaving behind a Miskito named William, who was hunting in the bush at the time. This Indian lived a solitary life on the island for three years when finally he was rescued by another party of English buccaneers under Cook. The first man from the rescuing vessel jumping on land was likewise a Miskito, named Robin. Dampier belonged to the party and relates the account (I, 84–86).[44]

MARAUDING EXPEDITIONS TO THE SPANISH SETTLEMENTS.—Led by their allies, the buccaneers, the Miskito also formerly undertook incursions in the interior of Honduras and Nicaragua by ascending the larger rivers. They surprised and plundered the nearest Spanish settlements, capturing the women and children. During the eighteenth century the towns Catacamas, Juticalpa, Segovia (now Ocotal), Jinotega, Matagalpa, and some settlements of Chontales were several times entirely destroyed and some of them were then

[43] Vide also Basil Ringrose, The History of the Bucaniers of America. Part II. The dangerous voyage and bold attempts of Capt. Barth. Charp, Watlin, Sawkins, Coxon, and others, in the South Sea. London, 1699, chap. XI, p. 54.

[44] See also Ringrose, *ubi supra*, chap. XV. The Scotch sailor Alexander Selkirk, whose adventures suggested to Daniel Defoe his famous work Robinson Crusoe, was therefore not the first or the only inhabitant of Juan Fernandez; the latter lived there from 1704 to 1709.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

transplanted some distance away from the navigable rivers in order to be less exposed to attack (M. W.: 300, 302, 306; Peláez: II, 165; Peralta, b: 102, 120; Belt: 241, 255–256). In those days the products of Nicaragua were generally shipped by way of Rio San Juan, but this important waterway was often in the hands of the Indians.

Attacks by the Miskito on the Spanish settlements were also carried on occasionally as far north as Río Chamelecón in Honduras; sometimes these Indians joined the English logwood cutters operating in what since has become British Honduras.

More frequently the canoes of the Miskito were directed southward toward Rio Matina in Costa Rica, where the Spaniards had established important cacao plantations during the seventeenth century. The latter had to be abandoned later, owing to the incursions of the Indians. The historians of Costa Rica devote large space to these expeditions into their territory. (See also M. W.: 302, 307, 310.) Although they ceased gradually during the latter part of the eighteenth century, acts of authority were exercised by the Miskito on that coast for some time afterwards. Still in 1838 they monopolized the fishery of the hawk's-bill turtle as far as Puerto Limón, collecting a tribute from the fishers engaged in that occupation (Cooper: 12).

THE MISKITO IN THE JAMAICAN MAROON WAR.—The Miskito rendered very valuable service to the English of Jamaica in aiding to suppress the maroon rebellion on that island. These maroons were the descendants of the Negroes and mulattoes who took to the mountains, in order to preserve their freedom, when the English in 1655 wrested Jamaica from the Spaniards.

On June 25, 1720, a convention was signed between Sir Nicholas Lawes, Governor of Jamaica, and Jeremy (Jeremias), "King" of the Miskito, whereby the latter engaged himself to send a body of Indians to track the revolted slaves. This treaty was formally agreed to and passed upon by the Assembly of Jamaica.

Two hundred Indians were brought to Port Royal and organized in companies under their own officers. They were paid 40 shillings a month and a pair of shoes. They remained several months and rendered valuable services to the English. A few years later the maroons were active again and about 1725 Capt. Robert Lade brought 100 "Muschetos" Indians to Jamaica to fight them (Lade: II, 7, etc.).

Again, in 1738, 200 Miskito were brought for the same purpose. They were formed into companies under their own leaders with white guides assigned to each company, who were to lead them to the enemy. They did good service as trackers and with their assistance the maroons were soon pressed on all sides, cut off from their provision grounds, and compelled to make peace (Long: II, 344–345; Edwards: I, 529–530).

2: Kirchhoff Σ-4 (no date) 1948
SA15 Mosquito SA15

[754] Among some tribes, this ceremony is repeated at a later date. The *Sumo* [754] are said to have practiced circumcision. The couvade is general.

[755] Individual names are derived from some peculiarity or mannerism. Such names were not used to address a person, especially older people.

[761] **Puberty.**—Puberty ceremonies consist of tests, the details of which vary from tribe to tribe. *Sumo* boys receive serious military training at puberty.

[761] Menstruating women are considered to be impure and are confined to a corner of the house (*Sumo*) or to a special hut (*Mosquito* and *Paya*). They are cleansed by bathing or, among the *Sumo*, by a steam bath.

763 **Death.**—Death is thought to be due to sorcery or to the machinations of evil spirits. People about to die are abandoned in the bush, or they may even be killed. If a person dies in a village it has to be abandoned.

764 The dead are usually buried in the dwelling, which is abandoned (*Paya*), or, among some tribes, in a special hut. The corpse is placed in a coffin made of a canoe wrapped in bark cloth. Personal belongings, food, and a dog are placed in the grave. Among the *Mosquito*, corpses were sometimes sewed in a mat and placed upright in a grave, facing the east. Slaves, servants, and sometimes a shaman were killed and buried with *Mosquito* chiefs. Early reports of the mummification of chiefs appear to be exceptional and may refer to other tribes. Clay and gold masks of [533] chiefs are reported from one locality, probably *Sumo*.

765 The dead were mourned in many ways. The relatives cut their hair short, wept, and fasted. A mourning ritual included attempts at suicide, which friends prevented. The women sang songs in praise of the dead. Anniversary ceremonies, held at varying intervals, were intended to appease evil spirits and to aid the soul on its long journey to the hereafter.

[767] Shamans invoke the soul in order to discover who was responsible for
769 the death and to ascertain future needs. About a year after death the *Mosquito* hold an elaborate anniversary ceremony, in which face masks and other paraphernalia are employed. The *Sumo* have similar ceremonies which differ in detail. Formerly, a *Mosquito* woman exhumed the bones of her husband and carried them in a bag for a year, subsequently hanging them in the house. She might not remarry for 2 years.

770 According to Von Hagen (1943), *Jicaque* death and burial customs are a curious mixture of Christianity and their own beliefs. After some preliminary mourning the body, clothed in the garments in which the person died, is wrapped in cloth or bark cloth and buried in the cemetery. A small wooden cross is put at the foot of the grave, and a pot through which a hole is punched is laid at the head. The cemetery is an enclosure on a hilltop, which is walled off, as are Spanish cemeteries.

WARFARE

721 Most of the information concerning warfare pertains to the *Mosquito*, who were highly organized for this purpose. Undoubtedly much of this

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
SA15 Mosquito SA15

is an elaboration of aboriginal customs, encouraged by the English. Early records indicate that the *Sumo*, *Poya*, and *Jicaque* developed similar but perhaps less complicated organizations in order to resist the Spanish Conquest. Probably they too had waged war previous to the 16th century, but available data do not permit identification of aboriginal customs.

Among the *Mosquito* and *Sumo* all men were potential warriors. They were arranged according to military ranks, which were distinguished by feather insignia. The warriors, particularly of the *Sumo*, were subject to severe tests including dietary restrictions, and they celebrated various ceremonies. Women were not permitted to attend these ceremonies, and the warriors were not supposed to have any relations with women. Before a battle shamans were consulted. The warriors, painted black, usually attacked the enemy at night. The *Mosquito* took prisoners to be sold as slaves to the Whites. The *Sumo* killed as many of the enemy as possible. They mutilated the corpses and wore the teeth and fingernails as trophies. Some of the *Sumo* reputedly ate the roasted flesh of their enemies in order to inflict further insult upon them and to make sure that they were completely destroyed.

ESTHETIC AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Dances and music.—All ceremonies are the time for much intoxication, dancing, and singing. On frequent occasions the *Mosquito* sing in groups or singly. There are many kinds of dances, some of them specially for women and others for particular ceremonies. There are two types of drums: a goblet-shaped drum used in funeral and memorial ceremonies and a drum of European origin which is used in some of the ceremonies and, perhaps, as a signal drum. Conch-shell trumpets and reed or bone flutes with one to four stops are blown. *Sumo* and *Mosquito* shamans use flutes 6 feet (2 m.) long. The musical bow, with or without a gourd sounding box, is played by women. Gourd rattles are also used.

RELIGION

The *Sumo*, *Mosquito*, and *Poya* believe in a deity, called "Our Father," who lives in the sky. He is little interested in mankind, is too far removed to be approached by humans, and has little influence upon human affairs. The sun, moon, and stars, especially the Pleiades, are considered to be supernatural beings. They figure in the mythology and are of some significance in the religious philosophy. Solar and lunar eclipses, thunder, wind, the rainbow, and other celestial phenomena are explained by myths. The last three are the agents of the major deities.

A *Sumo* creation myth recounts the activities of two brothers who made the animals out of maize cobs. People are believed to have been made from rays of the sun. The *Poya* believe that their god sowed men in the